



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
US ARMY TRANSPORTATION SCHOOL
MARITIME & INTERMODAL TRAINING DEPARTMENT
461 KERR ROAD
JOINT BASE LANGLEY-EUSTIS, VIRGINIA 23604-5458

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

ATSP-TDM

1 January 2012

**MEMORANDUM FOR ALL ASSIGNED PERSONNEL IN THE MARITIME &
INTERMODAL TRAINING DEPARTMENT**

**SUBJECT: Handling, Storing, Administration, Analysis, and Scoring of Testing Materials
Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)**

1. **PURPOSE:** To establish standard operating procedures (SOP) and guidelines for prescribing policies and procedures for the handling, storing, administration, analyzing and scoring of Maritime Training Department examination/testing materials IAW TRADOC PAM 350-70-5, **SYSTEMS APPROACH TO TRAINING: TESTING** dated 20 Aug 2004.

2. **SCOPE:** This SOP is applicable to the personnel assigned to the Maritime & Intermodal Training Department and its student body. SOP is also applicable to those personnel assigned to the Marine Qualification Division, Office, Chief of Transportation, who handle test materials. References and related publications are listed in Appendix A. When the term "testing materials" is used, it includes the following:

- a. The test booklet, diskettes, CDs, or any other medium that contains test questions.
- b. All ancillary materials (answer sheets, scoring keys, conversion tables, manuals for administering and scoring, and automated systems for administration, scoring, and recording of the results).
- c. Board interview procedures and scoring forms.

3. **DEFINITIONS:** Not applicable.

4. **RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- a. The Maritime & Intermodal Training Department Division Chiefs are responsible for the strict compliance and enforcement of this SOP. Along with this responsibility comes full authority towards compliance.
- b. Assigned personnel will read, understand, and take an active role towards the strict compliance of this SOP.

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c. All instructors and civilians proponent certified, assigned to the Maritime & Intermodal Training Department, are hereby designated as Test Proctors and Administrators. Test Proctors and Test Administrators will ensure that all examination materials are effectively safeguarded from loss and compromise; take corrective action when loss or compromise is indicated. The course/class managers and training specialist will ensure that the examinations are correctly calculated and entered in the student's academic records.

d. The training specialist is responsible for controlling all tests used for courses taught by instructor staff, the course's End-of-Course Comprehensive Tests (EOCCT) and OCOT's US Army Maritime Certification Examination (both AC and RC).

e. Class managers, training specialists, NCOICs and OICs are responsible for inspecting testing sessions to determine that tests are properly handled and administered. This ensures only authorized personnel handle test booklets, scoring keys, and completed answer sheets.

f. The training specialist will ensure that test results are forwarded to the Academic Records specialist to be recorded in each individual student record.

g. Each instructor is responsible for safeguarding all testing materials and must remain cognizant of the sensitive information contained within, i.e., student's social security numbers, etc. AR 25-55, the Department of the Army Freedom of Information Act Program, provides further guidance on releasing sensitive information.

h. Each instructor will provide technical assistance to academic evaluation boards as required.

5. PROCEDURES: The following guidelines are now the SOP regarding the creation, composition, and safeguarding of all testing materials for all courses conducted by the Maritime & Intermodal Training Department. Pending further guidance from higher headquarters, we will execute the safeguarding in the following manner:

a. Creation and Composition.

(1) *Question Cards.*

(a) Composition. Test Questions (multiple-choice and essay) will be created using a scenario driven situation. All of the above or none of the above will not be used as answers on multiple-choice question cards. All multiple-choice questions will have four (4) answers using A, B, C, or D. These questions will normally begin with what, where, when, why, or how, whenever possible. The answers to the multiple-choice questions will be easily discernable. The entire solution and points achievable will be identified on essay question cards. The Transportation School's rules for writing multiple-choice questions are found in Appendix B of this SOP.

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(b) Number of Questions. As the Rule-of-Thumb, the minimum number of questions generated for use in the question banks will be determined by the amount of testable conference hours for a subject, IAW the POI, multiplied by eight (8). The Navigation Rules POI conference hours will be multiplied by twelve (12) because 50 questions are used per test exclusively pertaining to this one subject.

(c) Approval Procedure. All question cards will be staffed through the training specialist/course manager and Chief of each Division for approval prior to placing them into the question bank file. Questions will not be used on a test prior to approval.

(2) *Tests.*

(a) Composition. Refer to specific course POIs and evaluation plans to determine the subjects included in a particular test.

(b) Number of Questions. As the Rule-of-Thumb, the number of questions per test will be determined by the amount of testable conference hours per testable subject, IAW the POI and evaluation plan, multiplied by two (2) but not less than a total of 20 questions.

(c) Format. Each test will consist of a minimum of 20 multiple-choice and/or essay questions. Exceptions to this rule are the performance-type examinations, i.e., ship-handling, line-handling, marlinspike seamanship, RTCH operations, etc.

(d) Usage. MITD's goal is to create a new version of each test for use with each new class. The same version of a test will not be used in consecutive classes. For example, if revision "1" and "2" were used for Class 001-12, then neither revision "1" nor "2" will be used for Class 002-12. Where possible a random generator will be used to create each test version. Finally, a version of a given test will not be used more than four (4) times total.

b. Security.

(1) *General Provisions.* Test security is everyone's responsibility. The following security measures will be adhered to at all times:

(a) The training specialist will maintain an inventory of examination material.

(b) Test components will be stored in locked rooms or containers where they are not accessible to unauthorized individuals. Question card banks will be stored in the vault file (electronically on diskette or CD) and in the course file located in an area controlled by the Chief of each Division and the training specialist (one card for each question). Questions and tests developed by electronic means will be transferred from the computer's hard drive to CD or external/removable hard drive, placed in the vault file, and then deleted from the computer's hard drive. Question banks and tests will not remain on any computer's hard drive.

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(c) The training specialist, class managers, and OIC must exercise close supervision over all phases of test creation, receipt, storage, protection, issue, administration, scoring, and destruction. Positive control of question cards will be maintained at all times. When reviewing, revising, or removing question cards from the files, no matter the time duration, each question card will be signed out using a test material control register and inventory sheet. Question cards will be reviewed annually by the Division Chiefs and appropriate class managers to ensure question cards remain relevant. Division Chiefs will initial and date the paper copies of the question cards at the top right corner of the card, and sign and date the approval block on the back of the card. Questions no longer relevant will be removed from both banks, vault file, and instructor's file. The training specialist will accomplish destruction of the question cards and maintain a record of the date and which ones were destroyed.

(d) Security requirements established in this SOP meet the requirements for handling FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY (FOUO) material. These components bear the designation TEST MATERIAL SENSITIVE IN NATURE. Test components are not to be shown to anyone unless it has been determined that such disclosure is essential to the performance of official duties prescribed in appropriate directives and is necessary for those individuals that administer and score tests. Completed test answer sheets will not be returned to the students. The test score is the only information passed on to a student.

(2) *Procedures concerning test security.* Specific procedures concerning test security and control that will be complied with are as follows:

(a) The training specialist will maintain an inventory of test materials. The inventory will include test booklets, administration notes, and answer sheets/scoring keys.

(b) Test booklets, materials, and scoring keys will be serially numbered for internal security control. The test material will be labeled with the course number, class number, exam number, POI file number, copy number, and book number. Serial numbers will be indelible. Serial numbers of previously destroyed materials will not be reassigned to newer test material.

(c) DA Label 87 (FOUO Cover Sheet) need not be attached to test material when the material is actually being used for test administration and scoring purposes.

(d) Controlled test materials will be double wrapped when shipped or mailed. Such material will be mailed by registered or certified mail as shown below. The inner envelope or package (also addressed) will be stamped with the following notation:

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY
TEST MATERIAL
TO BE OPENED BY TEST CONTROL OFFICER ONLY

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(1) Inner envelopes or packages will not be opened by message center or mailroom personnel, but will be given directly to the TCO upon receipt.

(2) Scoring keys/answer sheets will not be provided to anyone outside the Maritime & Intermodal Training Department unless authorized by the OIC.

(3) In any case, items with test questions will not be mailed in the same package with test answer sheets.

(e) All test components must be accounted for at all times. When test components, except unused answer sheets, are taken from and returned to the locked cabinets, exact counts of these components will be made.

(f) Test components that have become mutilated or marked - will be destroyed.
EXCEPTION: test components used during the EOCCT or USAMC and all test failures will be destroyed after a period of one (1) year. Destruction will be accomplished by shredding machines eliminating the possible recognition or reconstruction of protected information. The training specialist will accomplish destruction of such test components, and maintain a record of the date and which materials were destroyed.

(g) Test materials, except for blank answer sheets, will be kept in locked rooms or containers when not in transit or in actual use. Test scoring keys/answer sheets will not be stored in the same drawer as test booklets and blank answer sheets. Only persons whose duties require use of the test materials will have access to the keys and combinations to storage facilities. The training specialist and OIC will maintain the only copy of these keys and/or combinations of the storage facilities. Test materials will not leave the immediate operating area or be taken home overnight under any circumstances.

c. Loss, compromise, or possible compromise of test materials. Loss or possible unauthorized disclosure of test materials has been determined to have potential Army-wide implications. Upon discovery of loss, compromise, or suspected compromise, the following procedures will be strictly followed:

(1) Notify the chain-of-command immediately. The notification should include the description of the material lost or compromised, the identity of the releasing party, the recipient, all other persons involved, and the circumstances surrounding the loss or compromise.

(2) Stop all testing with the jeopardized version of the test.

(3) Impound all tests and completed answer sheets of the jeopardized version of the test. Place test materials in a locked cabinet. The answer sheets completed before the compromise, suspected compromise, or loss occurred - will not be impounded.

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(4) Resume testing with another version of the examination only when directed to do so.

(5) Monitor all future testing sessions very closely for any evidence of compromise.

(6) If the circumstances surrounding loss or compromise of the testing material show that an investigation is warranted under AR 15-6, all information will be documented and forwarded through the chain-of-command.

d. Records of Testing. *Test score transmittal data.* The training specialist or class manager will prepare correspondence to transmit test scores to academic records. The test results for all MCEs will also be transmitted to the Chief, Maritime Qualification Division (MQD), and for students being administered exams away from Fort Eustis by TCOs, the test results will be forwarded to the respective TCO. IAW AR 25-400-2, the Army Records Information Management System, copies of this correspondence will be maintained for one (1) year. ADDITIONALLY: test materials used during the EOCCT/USAMC will be destroyed after a period of one (1) year. Records will contain, as a minimum, the individual's name, rank, organization, all parts, composite scores, and the reason for testing. Indicate whether the test is an initial, first retest, second retest, and so forth.

e. Test Administration.

(1) *General.* Testing procedures and conditions can affect test scores. Poor conditions may decrease test scores significantly below the scores of those tested under favorable conditions. For this reason, examinations must be given under standard conditions and procedures that allow each student the opportunity to do his/her best. Such test conditions and procedures are outlined below. Examinees taking a test will not be left unattended under any circumstances. MITD's goal is one (1) test proctor per 12 students or fraction thereof. At a minimum, two (2) persons (the proctor and one (1) other) will be present for each test.

(2) *Authorized test instructions.* Specific directions for test administration accompany each examination. They must be strictly adhered to. Proctors will use their individual Division's test materials in preparation for, or during the administration of the test. Divisional tolerance sheets and the answer keys that accompany an individual examination will be considered when scoring tests.

(3) *Favorable test conditions.* The procedures for administering tests should bring out a student's best performance. Make sure the student who takes the test is:

(a) Reasonably free from distraction in the surrounding environment.

(b) Aware of the importance of, and reasons for taking the test.

(c) Comfortable and rested.

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(4) *Testing environment.* Ideal testing conditions are very difficult to achieve. However, close attention to the following features will provide adequate conditions:

(a) Ensure the classroom is quiet; frequent or loud noises may interfere with testing performance. Never give tests in a location where ordinary business is conducted.

(b) Ensure testing instructions are understood by all examinees.

(c) The TCO's/proctor's voice must be clearly heard by all students being tested.

(d) Provide adequate comfortable lighting, ventilation, temperature, and humidity for the classroom and working surfaces. If possible, do not conduct testing when environmental conditions are so extreme that they interfere with concentration.

(e) The space allotted to each student must be wide enough to hold a test booklet, a separate answer sheet, and any other required testing materials.

(f) No student may give or receive help on the meaning of test questions by another student during the examination.

(5) *Preparation for testing session.* Proctors will follow the testing directions exactly, ensure accurate timing, and carefully safeguard testing materials. He/she will ensure all copies of the test are legible. Each proctor will take the test prior to giving it to the students. This procedure will be standard, and ensures the solution sheet provided with the test is correct and free of errors. It also allows the proctor to gain an appreciation of the student's perspective on the test and learn how to anticipate questions that most commonly arise.

(6) *Duties of proctors.*

(a) Verify each student's identification by checking students ID card prior to issuing examinations.

(b) Before each testing period, and with sufficient lead-time to take corrective action, the proctor will check the testing materials to ensure:

(1) An accurate number of examinations were prepared.

(2) Each copy is legible.

(3) Each copy is individually serial numbered correctly.

(4) Each student has the necessary materials for taking the test.

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(5) Each student's desk is cleared of any unauthorized material. This includes headgear, briefcases, notebooks, textbooks, etc.

(c) During the testing period, the proctor will:

(1) Remain available to answer student's questions, only as they pertain to the meaning of the test question, for example, reading the question aloud to the student, answering questions concerning testing procedures, time limits, purpose, and uses of the examination. Proctors/instructors will avoid revealing information that might influence the proper evaluation of the student. Explanations or answers to test questions will not be furnished. Proctors/instructors will refrain from persuading any type of a response to a test question.

(2) At the proper time interval, announce the time remaining for the examination.

(3) Ensure the students are following the directions correctly. The proctors should remain alert to detect and correct incorrect methods of determining answers.

(4) See that each student is doing his/her own work.

(5) Excuse a student to use the bathroom; not more than one (1) student at a time.

(7) *Administration of tests.*

(a) Standard Directions. The proctor will read the oral directions from the administrative portion of the examination packet. The oral directions will include a standard statement on the test to be given, how results will be used, and why it is important for each person to do his/her best. These remarks help dispel anxiety and release tension, yet stress the necessity for earnest effort. The proctor will inform the students what to do by reading aloud the directions verbatim. They will not be paraphrased or given from notes or memory; nor will they be adapted to the proctor's idea of what is more appropriate for local conditions. After reading the directions, the students will be allowed to ask questions.

(b) Time Limits. Time limits that are stated in the directions must be strictly observed. The start and stop times will be conspicuously posted. Proctors must ensure that students do not start work until the time begins and stop work when the time limit is reached.

(c) Standard Test Materials. Students will use pencils during the test session. In some instances, other materials may be authorized such as calculators, scratch paper, formats, and textbooks for use during open-book portions of examinations, etc. Such standards are established for the benefit of both the student and the proctor, ensures there is an equal opportunity for all students, and that proper testing and test control is possible.

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(8) *Answering student's questions.* As stated in paragraph 5e(6)(b)1) above, proctors/instructors will answer student's questions only as they pertain to the meaning of the test question, for example, reading the question aloud to the student, answering question concerning testing procedures, time limits, purpose and uses of the examination. Proctors/instructors will avoid revealing information that might influence the proper evaluation of the student. Explanations or answers to test questions will not be furnished. Proctors/instructors will refrain from persuading any type of a response to a test question. Students will not be permitted to have access to their answer sheets prior to grading and recording all student grades.

(9) *Collection and disposition of test materials.*

(a) Collection. After the signal to stop work has been given, the materials will be collected as quickly as possible. All test forms and scratch paper, if provided, must be strictly accounted for. Test booklets must be collected from all students. They must be counted and examined to ensure that no pages are missing before students are dismissed.

(b) Dismissal of students. Frequently, some of the students may finish before the time limit for the test has expired. If these persons are permitted to leave before the end of the test, care will be taken to ensure that they do not interact with the other students that have not completed their examination. The proctor is responsible for ensuring all directions have been complied with and all testing materials and scratch paper have been turned in. Test materials will be checked for completeness prior to dismissal of a student from the testing area.

(c) Disposition of test materials. All tests and testing supplies will be stored according to test security procedures in paragraph 5b above. Test materials will be retained for one (1) year (see AR 25-400-2). During the retention period, the material should be organized using the course identification, class number, and date of testing. Test materials will be destroyed after one (1) year by shredding. Destruction will be accomplished by shredding machines, eliminating the possible recognition or reconstruction of protected information. The training specialist will accomplish destruction of such test components and maintain a record of the date and which materials were destroyed.

(d) Retention of scored answer sheets. Answer sheets will be retained for one (1) year (see AR 25-400-2). During the retention period, the answer sheets should be organized using the course identification, class number, and date of testing. This is done to aid identification of answer sheets completed by particular individuals or groups. Answer sheets will be destroyed after one (1) year by shredding. Destruction will be accomplished by shredding machines, eliminating the possible recognition or reconstruction of protected information. The training specialist will accomplish destruction of the answer sheets and maintain a record of the date and which ones were destroyed.

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(10) *Reporting test results to students.* The TCO/proctor will report all test results to the person tested. This will be accomplished as soon as possible after the test has been scored and reviewed by the class manager or NCOIC/OIC. Class managers will ensure proper procedures are followed for any students failing an examination IAW established student-counseling procedures.

(11) *Retesting.* Please refer to applicable student evaluation plan.

(12) *Scoring.* All tests must be hand-scored by its own instructor staff. Personnel outside of MITD are not permitted to have access to answer keys/solution sheets unless it has been determined that such disclosure is essential to the performance of official duties prescribed in appropriate directives and are necessary for those individuals that administer and score tests. Refer to the answer sheet provided with the examination and appropriate tolerance sheets when determining student test scores. Proctors and/or class managers will consolidate and record student test scores and provide them to the training specialist. The training specialist or class manager will ensure that test results are forwarded to the Academic Records Specialist to be recorded in the student's academic training record as stated in paragraph 4f above.

(13) *Procurement and release of test materials.*

(a) *Procurement.* Proctors will procure the test materials from the training specialist by signing for each copy of the examination using a copy of the test material control register and inventory sheet. The training specialist is responsible for ensuring the test material control register and inventory sheet is accurately maintained. Once the proctor signs for the testing material, he/she becomes responsible for the proper safeguarding of said material.

(b) *Release of test materials.* Requests for release of testing materials from organizations outside of the US Army Transportation School (USATSCH) must be routed through the USATSCH chain-of-command. MITD's instructor staff is not authorized to release any testing material without receiving USATSCH's authority. Refer to AR 25-55, the Department of the Army Freedom of Information Act Program, for further guidance on releasing sensitive information.

6. **TEST ITEM ANALYSIS.** To ensure that test questions are grammatically correct, accurately reflect the material tested, and not misleading, each question will be analyzed from initial development through administration. To accomplish this we will adhere to the following procedures:

a. All questions will be developed IAW this SOP, para 5a(1)(a).

b. When initially developed each question will be reviewed in one of two ways; by a panel of subject matter experts (minimum of three (3)); or by the class manger, training specialist, and

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Division Chief. Questions will be reviewed for technical accuracy, grammar, and that the question is reflected in the lesson being tested.

c. Prior to the administration of an examination the questions will be reviewed again by the test proctor for technical accuracy, grammar, and that the question(s) was taught in the lesson(s) tested.

d. After each exam administration, each question will be evaluated to ascertain how many students missed it. For class sizes of 10 or below, if three (3) or more of a class missed the question it will be evaluated to determine if failure was due to the construction of the question, if material tested was no longer relevant, or because the material was not taught. For class sizes of 11 or more students, if 25 percent missed the question it will be evaluated to determine if failure was due to the construction of the question, if material tested was no longer relevant, or because the material was not taught.

e. If determined that a question is not valid it will be immediately withdrawn from the existing test bank and a new question developed. Refer to 5b(1)(c) for destruction and recording procedures.

7. ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS. This SOP is and will remain a living document. As doctrine and regulations change, parts of this SOP may change. When additions or deletions are made, they will be forwarded to all personnel in MITD.

///original signed///

Encl

DONALD A. TOPPING
Acting Director
Maritime & Intermodal Training Department

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Appendix A (Cited in paragraph 2)

References

Section 1

Required Publications

AR 25-55 (Cited in paragraph 4g.)

The Department of the Army Freedom of Information Act Program

AR 25-400-2 (Cited in paragraph 5d.)

The Army Records Management System (ARIMS)

AR 380-19

Information Systems Security

AR 611-5 (Cited in paragraph 1)

Army Personnel Selection and Classification Testing

Section II

Related Publications

A related publication is a source of additional information. The user does not have to read a related publication to understand this regulation.

AR 15-6 (Cited in paragraph 5c.(6))

Procedures for Investigating Officers and Boards of Officers

Section III

Prescribed Forms

Except where otherwise indicated, the following forms are available on the Army Electronic Library CD-ROM (EM 0001), the USAPA website (www.usapa.army.mil), through the Education Division (TAPC-PDE/APT Dist. Ctr.), PERSCOM, 2461 Eisenhower Avenue, Suite 803, Alexandria, VA 22331-0472.

DA Form 5159 (Cited in paragraph 5b.(a))

Inventory of Army Personnel Test Material

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Appendix B (Cited in paragraph 5a(1)(a))

Rules for Writing Multiple Choice Questions

Parts of a multiple-choice question

Stem_____the question or problem

Alternative_____all the choices

Distractors_____the incorrect or alternative choices

Keyed Response___the correct answer

EXAMPLE

Stem What is the capital of Virginia?

Distracter A. Alexandria

Keyed Response B. Richmond

Distracter C. Charlottesville

Distracter D. Norfolk

Situation: used when a stem is longer than one sentence in length. It is always written as a separate paragraph preceding the stem.

EXAMPLE

SITUATION: You are driving your car at highway speed. The alternator light comes on in the instrument panel.

Stem__What is the condition of your car's electrical system?

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

The stem is focused upon the action portion of the learning objective being tested and asks the question clearly, so the student knows what is being asked before reading the alternatives.

BAD EXAMPLE

John F. Kennedy ____.

A. was originally from Massachusetts.

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- B. had back problems from playing football.
- C. was the 30th President of the United States.
- D. had only one brother.

ACCEPTABLE SAMPLE

John F. Kennedy was president during___.

- A. the Korean War.
- B. the Bay of Pigs Incident.
- C. World War I.
- D. World War II.

The stem and/or situation should contain all information needed to respond to the test item. The stem should be written so that it can stand-alone.

BAD EXAMPLE

Which one of the following best defines cover?

- A. Protection against enemy observation.
- B. Protection against enemy counterattack.
- C. Protection against enemy fire.
- D. Protection against enemy infiltration.

ACCEPTABLE SAMPLE

Cover may be defined as protection against which enemy action?

- A. observation.
- B. counterattack.
- C. fire.
- D. infiltration.

The stem is realistic and cannot be answered by the untrained student. It is concise and grammatically correct and free of unnecessary information.

BAD EXAMPLE

John F. Kennedy, the 24th President of the United States and who died during his first term in office, was in the office during the___?

- A. the Korean War.

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- B. the Bay of Pigs Incident.
- C. World War I.
- D. World War II.

ACCEPTABLE SAMPLE

John F. Kennedy was in office during___?

- A. the Korean War.
- B. the Bay of Pigs Incident.
- C. World War I.
- D. World War II.

The stem does not give clues to the correct answer or contain words found in the correct answer.

BAD EXAMPLE

What does the term addition mean?

- A. Two or more numbers added together.
- B. One number subtracted from another.
- C. Two numbers that are multiplied together.
- D. Two numbers that are divided by the other.

ACCEPTABLE SAMPLE

What does the term addition mean?

- A. The sum of two or more numbers.
- B. One number subtracted from another.
- C. Two numbers multiplied together.
- D. Two numbers, one divided by the other.

Avoid using negative words in the stem (i.e., NOT or NEVER)

BAD EXAMPLE

Which of the following cities is NOT located in a state west of the Mississippi River?

- A. San Francisco.
- B. Philadelphia.
- C. Seattle.
- D. Las Vegas.

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ACCEPTABLE SAMPLE

Which of the following cities is located in a state east of the Mississippi River?

- A. San Francisco.
- B. Philadelphia.
- C. Seattle.
- D. Las Vegas.

The stem is only one sentence in length. When the stem needs to be longer than one sentence, a SITUATION must be used before the stem.

BAD EXAMPLE

You are operating your vehicle under ambush conditions. If you are caught in the kill zone, what action should you take?

- A. ____.
- B. ____.

ACCEPTABLE SAMPLE

SITUATION: You are operating your vehicle under ambush conditions. You are caught in the kill zone.

What action do you take?

- A. ____.
- B. ____.

The correct answer to a question should NOT be dependant upon answering another question correctly. Items should NOT be chained and one item should NOT cue another.

1. In selecting a good radio site, which of the following would be most desirable?

- A. at the top of a cliff.
- B. in a tunnel.
- C. between buildings.
- D. in a wooded area.

2. Why would a wooded area be good for a radio site?

- A. ____.

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B. ____.

C. ____.

D. ____.

The alternative designators (A_D) should be capitalized. The alternatives for an item consists of a keyed response and two to four distracters. Four is the preferred number of alternatives for a question. The keyed response is the ONE BEST answer to the question asked in the stem. There is one and only one correct answer to a question. No answer should be debatable. The keyed response is randomly scattered in the alternatives. Alternatives are similar in idea, focus, phrasing, and length.

BAD EXAMPLE

If the enemy is shelling your position, what action should your squad take?

- A. Send out for pizza.
- B. Attack.
- C. Eat lunch.
- D. Take cover in a previously prepared position.

ACCEPTABLE SAMPLE

If the enemy is shelling your position, what action should your squad take?

- A. Retreat from the area immediately.
- B. Begin to attack immediately.
- C. Keep up a rapid rate of fire.
- D. Take cover in a prepared position.

Alternatives do not overlap. This is particularly important when the answers are numbers (i.e., 10-20, 21-30).

BAD EXAMPLE

When drying color negative film, your film dryer temperature must never exceed____.

- A. 89°-91°F.
- B. 90°-92°F.
- C. 91°-93°F.
- D. 92°-94°F.

ACCEPTABLE SAMPLE

ATSP-TDM

SUBJECT: Handling, Storing, Administration, Analysis, and Scoring of Testing Materials
Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

When drying color negative film, your film dryer temperature must never exceed_____.

- A. 89°-91°F.
- B. 92°-94°F.
- C. 95°-97°F.
- D. 98°-100°F.

If the alternatives are written to include both simple and plural forms (i.e., one tank, ten tanks), the stem will be written to include both forms.

BAD EXAMPLE

Of the following vehicles, which one is a threat to the United States?

- A. XXX tank.
- B. X tank.
- C. XX tanks.
- D. YY tanks.

ACCEPTABLE SAMPLE

Which vehicle(s) would be a threat to the United States?

- A. XXX tank.
- B. X tank.
- C. XX tanks.
- D. YY tanks.

Elements are presented in the same sequence within each alternative. Alternatives containing numbers are listed in ascending order (lowest to highest) and are aligned in the unit place.

BAD EXAMPLE

What is the weight, in pounds, of the 47 incendiary bomb?

- A. 100.
- B. Ten.
- C. One Thousand.
- D. 500.

ACCEPTABLE SAMPLE

What is the weight, in pounds, of the 47 incendiary bomb?

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- A. 10.
- B. 100.
- C. 500.
- D. 1000.

If the stem is NOT in question form and is completed by one of the alternatives, the completion must be grammatically correct.

The capital of Virginia is ____.

- A. Alexandria.
- B. Charlottesville.
- C. Norfolk.
- D. Richmond.

Words are not repeated in the alternative when they can be placed in the stem. “NONE OF THE ABOVE” or “ALL OF THE ABOVE” are not used as alternatives. If a situation block is used on the test, it comes directly before the item it refers to. If the situation will be used for more than one item, the block is entitled “SITUATION for items ____ through ____”. The situation provides background information necessary for the student to respond to the stem. No unnecessary information should be included. The situation provides a set of circumstances that are relative and based on job performance. It identifies the equipment or conditions needed to respond to a specific number of items.